

65-1019

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 25, 1965

REFERRAL TO NSC NOT REQUIRED

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

I have just completed a review of 119 interdepartmental committees of the Government that have been established by law or by Presidential directive.

Interdepartmental committees can often greatly facilitate coordination. But extreme care must be exercised to make sure that a committee is the most efficient way to accomplish a given task and to assure that committees are used effectively.

Improper use of committees can waste time, delay action, and result in undesirable compromise. Each participant in committee deliberations should assess the work of the group continuously to assure that it is directed toward valid and useful purposes. Committees that are not clearly accomplishing such purposes should be reformed or abolished.

I have asked the Budget Director to review the need for a number of committees. Where appropriate, he will recommend steps to abolish or merge a number of them, or to have their functions performed in other ways. I want you to lend your full cooperation to this undertaking.

Pursuant to Bureau of the Budget Circular A-63, you will soon be preparing a report on interdepartmental committees for fiscal year 1965. I have asked for a report on the results of this year's review. You should apply the highest standard of usefulness and effectiveness in your review of committees chaired by your agency, however established. I have been advised that 163 committees were terminated in fiscal year 1964, while 203 were established. We can and must do better than this.

On November 19, I said to the Cabinet that to provide for the new programs of the Great Society we must take steps to reform or eliminate existing programs where such action is indicated. This principle should guide you in your review of interdepartmental committees.

